## **David DAWSON and Frances CASE**

David was born in the small community of Weasenham All Saints in Norfolk County England to William Dawson and Ann Rose (both born locally).

WEASENHAM ALL SAINTS bapt. marr. and bur. 1568-1812

He grew up here,



Weasenham All Saints Church, Norfolk, England

and married Frances Case (daughter of Richard Case and Elizabeth Tann) from the nearby parish of Beeston – Next – Mileham.

Page 29 1790-125. Charles Son of Thomas and the be Gooderson Gooderson. Charles Son of Thomas and the be Gooderson Gooderson. Cate Phabe Swingel born August 20" bap augt 21" Registered August 21" by me W. Barnwell Acre 226. Frances Saughter of Michard and Elizabeth Case Case. Cate Eliz Janny born. September 2. orph Sop. Of Megistered September of Wightsamwell her.



Beeston – Next – Mileham, Norfolk, England

The couple raised 5 children in Weasenham - their last being born in 1833. The baptismal records of each of David's children record that he was a Labourer. In all probability the family was very poor.

In the year 1834 a law was passed to permit poor law unions to supply money and other necessities to help the poor in their passage to the Colonies. Records indicate that between the years 1836 and 1846, the Boards of Guardians assisted about 14,000 English and Welsh people to emigrate, largely to Canada. Also there was a movement in individual English parishes to "encourge" any who might at some point become a burden on the parish to emigrate by furnishing the family with everything from clothing to cash to facilitate their exit. It is probably no coincidence that in this time period (1836 according the facts given in the 1901 census by son George) that David and his family set sail for Canada. It would not be surprising to learn that there was celebration in some quarters when the Dawsons left their home parish of Weasenham All Saints, Norfolk County. It seems that David's behaviour was combative, and that he had a tendency to over - indulge in alcoholic beverages.

It seems that no sooner had he disembarked from the ship, when David found himself in trouble with the law. On the 24th of June 1837 David Dawson was apprehended for the crime of assault, and was released from jail four days later after paying a fine. Then on October 20th of the same year he was again charged with assault and had the choice of a 33 pound fine, or one month in jail. He chose the fine option and was released 4 days later. At this point he disappears from the records. He probably died soon thereafter since his widow remarried (to John Willis) in 1838 at Christs Church Cathedral in Hamilton, shown below:

day of theyest

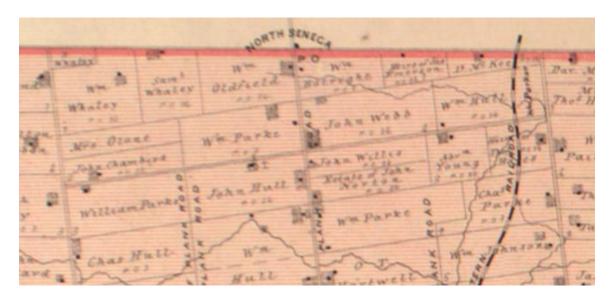
Nothing is known of David's cause of death, or his place of burial. It is perhaps telling that none of his children named any of their sons David. It is possible, however, that David deserted the family. There is a David Dawson born England age 50 in the 1852 census of Ontario residing with the Baxter family, working as a labourer, and of the W. Methodist faith. The name David Dawson is rare in England, and David from Weasenham appears to be the only one in the parish baptismal records for that time frame. The age is close enough for a census record when the head of the household likely estimated David's age to a rounded off 50 – as seen in the document below. He is the only David Dawson in the census of Canada. This David Dawson was living in Bertie Township, Welland County, Ontario. The property is located on Concession 2 Lot 14 between Ft. Erie on the Niagara River and Ridgeway. He is also living with the same family in the 1861 census of Bertie Township, but his age is given as 52 (being a labourer underestimating age makes sense if you want to keep your job), and he is of the Church of England. So did David die in 1837, or did he desert his family then and move to the other end of the Niagara Peninsula? It is unlikely that we will ever know the real story.

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What we do know, however, is that on 12 August 1838 Frances Case, widow (she did not use her married surname, which is unusual) of Hamilton was married John Willis, bachelor of the Grand River Tract at Christs Church Cathedral. Frances was 15 years older than John, and had 5 teen or pre-teen aged children. It appears that John moved to the Saltfleet – Grimsby area soon after the marriage since their two children were born in the Grimsby area - Mary Ann born 1841 and Catharine born 1843 (baptized at the Grimsby Anglican Church). The extended family, including 3 of the Dawson sons of

Frances, moved to locations along the Plank Road (Highway 6, Upper James Street) in Glanford Township toward the Seneca Township (Haldimand County) line.

By the 1861 census John and Francis and their unmarried daughter were residing along the Plank Road, Lot 3, on a 50 acre parcel of land.



John's property can be seen on the above map of Seneca Township (1879). However it appears that Frances died in 1861. The property is close to White Church Cemetery, where son Francis Dawson and his two wives are buried, and likely Frances is buried here too.

Dr. David K. Faux Cypress, California; Caledonia, Ontario 2 July 2017